



Appealinna Death Trip









The smell of death is everywhere, eating into your nostrils and the back of your throat. Silence spreads across the parched landscape. The sun beats down in a shadowless world. Years of drought have dried up what used to be a 'permanent' waterhole. A honeyeater pecks into the dry creek bed trying to will some moisture to rise to the surface. Desiccated skeletons of kangaroos lie under the only tree for miles. Ruins lay on either side of the gully. And in every ruin, in every room carcass after carcass of kangaroos. Were they seeking a warm place to die, hoping to avoid the dingoes and wedge-tailed eagles? Or sheltering from the sun, hoping a human might bring water?

In the 1850s, English pastoralist Joseph Wills took up unwanted land on the southern side of the creek and started building stockyards as well as a homestead. Soon after establishing his run copper miners arrived and decided to settle across the creek on the northern side. A 13-year argument over lease boundaries and access to the Appealinna water spring began. Joseph ended up in Adelaide's Yatala Prison after allegedly firing a pistol at the miners.

170 years later and what has changed? Farmers still destroy the land by trying to eke out a living on arid marginal lands. Mining companies can start operations on privately owned land against the wishes of landholders. Both activities contribute to the effects of climate change, resulting in more extremes of weather including severe drought. And both activities are still premised today on the erroneous belief that man can control nature.

Appealinna ruins are in the Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park in South Australia. The Adnyamathanha people (meaning hills or rock people) are the traditional custodians. They were largely displaced from their lands in the 1840s.



















































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